

## **REMOVABLE GOLF BAG SLEEVE**

### **TECHNICAL FIELD**

**[0001]** The present invention relates generally to a golf club carrying devices and more specifically to a removable golf bag sleeve that is portable.

### **BACKGROUND ART**

**[0002]** During a game of golf, golfers typically carry a set of golf clubs in a golf bag or the like. Conventional golf bags are usually fabricated from a relatively soft material and are open at the upper end to allow access to the clubs contained within the golf bag. Conventional golf bags have one or more straps that are utilized to carry the bag on the user or caddy's shoulder. Alternatively, some golfers may choose to strap the golf bag to a motorized cart or a handcart. In fact, on many new golf courses, the use of motorized carts is required or all golfers.

**[0003]** While a golf bag provides a convenient method of carrying a set of golf clubs, and golf carts further facilitate the mobility of such clubs, it is still often impractical to carry the entire set of golf clubs to every shot.

**[0004]** For example, a golfer near a putting green typically needs only short-range clubs, such as a putter, a pitching or sand wedge, or perhaps a lob wedge. As it is usually against the course rules to place a golf bag or drive a golf cart on or near the putting greens, golfers frequently find their entire set of clubs quite a distance from where they must actually make a shot. As a result, golfers typically remove a subset of clubs from their golf bag and transport the clubs by hand to their golf ball at a location near the putting green.

**[0005]** Another example of the impracticality of bringing one's entire set of clubs to the ball is evident where golf courses do not allow a golf cart to be driven off of a paved trail. Many golf balls, of course, land a considerable distance from such paved trails. It is clearly impractical, in such a situation, to unstrap the golf bag from the golf cart each and every time one leaves the cart to find the ball. In addition, where pace of play is strictly enforced, it may also be impractical in terms of time considerations. More likely, the golfer will try to anticipate which clubs he or she may need and then bring that particular subset of clubs to the ball. However, if the golfer guesses incorrectly and does not bring the correct club, he must walk back to his golf bag and get the correct club or play the shot with a club that the golfer would preferably not use.

**[0006]** In all such situations, where a golfer is away from his golf bag with a subset of his golf clubs, several problems become evident. First, after a golfer has selected the proper club for the shot, the remaining clubs are typically laid on the ground near the golfer. This not only causes the handles of these clubs to contact a potentially wet and dirty grass surface, but the possibility of forgetting these clubs after the shot is greatly increased. Moreover, while it is easy to carry one golf club, it is not always easy to carry two or three. Still further, while picking golf clubs up from the ground is not all that difficult, it does require the golfer to bend down and scoop the shafts up with his hand, which inevitably causes a golfer's hand or glove to become wet and soiled unnecessarily. Finally, in areas of deep grass, one or more clubs may be submerged within the grass and inadvertently be left behind after the golfer executes the shot.

**[0007]** It is thus highly desirable to provide a golf club carrier that is easy to use and transport and addresses each of these concerns.

## **SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

**[0008]** The present invention provides a removable golf sleeve that is easily coupled to and uncoupled from a golf bag. The golf sleeve is preferably coupled to the exterior of the golf bag, and stored within the interior of the bag, for easy accessibility. The golf sleeve is configured to hold one or more clubs easily and be easily transportable to and from the golf bag.

**[0009]** The golf sleeve is preferably formed as a nylon bag having a highly visible collar, handle and loop. The nylon bag is large enough to hold multiple golf clubs in such a way as to prevent water and dirt from accumulating on the grips, even if the sleeve is set down on wet or dirty ground. The golf sleeve has one or more attachment features used to releasably couple the golf sleeve to the exterior of the golf bag. The golf sleeve is preferably coupled to the golf bag such that the bag portion is contained within the interior of the golf bag, but may also be coupled such that the nylon bag is exterior to the golf bag.

**[0010]** The collar surrounds and is sewn into the upper half of the golf sleeve and provides the open upper end through which golf clubs may be introduced to the nylon bag. The collar also has one or more rings sewn therein that are used to releasably attach the golf sleeve to the golf bag at the upper end.

**[0011]** The handle primarily functions as the mechanism by which the golfer grips the sleeve to transport it to and from the golf bag. The handle is sewn onto the nylon bag and within the collar such that the handle is easily picked up by the golfer off the ground with a minimal chance of the golfer touching the ground, therein minimizing or preventing the golfer from getting his hand, with or without a golf glove, wet or dirty.

**[0012]** The loop is sewn into the top of the collar and primarily functions as an alternative handle for picking the sleeve up out of the golf bag or for picking the sleeve up off the ground after use. The loop may alternatively function as an easy attachment point for the sleeve to the bag. For example, the loop could be placed around the top of an umbrella, which is typically carried on the exterior of a golf bag.

**[0013]** The collar, loop, and handle are typically formed of the same material as the rest of the nylon bag, but are formed in an alternative, bright color (such as bright yellow) that contrasts with the nylon bag portion. This decreases the chances that the golfer will forget to retrieve the sleeve after executing a shot.

**[0014]** In an alternative preferred embodiment, a tripod stand could be incorporated into the nylon bag. The tripod stand opens when the bag is placed with its bottom portion on the ground, and functions to prop the bag such that the collar remains above the surface of the ground, therein allowing easy access to the clubs contained with the bag and further preventing water accumulation potential on the grips or shafts.

**[0015]** Other objects and advantages of the present invention will become apparent upon the following detailed description and appended claims, and upon reference to the accompanying drawings.

## **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

**[0016]** Figure 1 is a cut-away perspective view of a golf bag having a removable golf sleeve according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

**[0017]** Figure 2 is a perspective view of a golf bag having a removable golf sleeve according to another preferred embodiment of the present invention.

**[0018]** Figures 3-5 are perspective views of the removable golf sleeve of Figure 1.

**[0019]** Figure 6 is a top view of the golf sleeve according to one preferred embodiment of the present invention.

**[0020]** Figure 7 is a top view of the golf sleeve according to another preferred embodiment of the present invention.

**[0021]** Figure 8 is a perspective view of a removable sleeve according to another preferred embodiment of the present invention.

**[0022]** Figure 9 is a close-up view of a portion of Figure 8.

## **DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT**

**[0023]** Referring now to Figure 1, a cut-away perspective view of a typical golf bag 10 used by most golfers today. The golf bag 10 is generally cylindrical in shape and has a solid bottom 12 and an open and relatively rigid top end 14 for receipt of golf clubs with an interior region 15. The golf bag 10 has one or more zippered storage pockets 16, 18 located near the bottom 12 for receipt of various golf items, including, for example, golf balls and golf tees. The golf bag 10 may also have one or more larger zippered storage pockets for storage of clothing or other items. The open end 14 is typically formed with a number of partitions 22 to separate the golf clubs. A metal ring 24 is typically sewn within a portion of the open end 14. A clip 25 may be coupled to the metal ring 24 or elsewhere on the golf bag 10. The clip 25 is typically used for retaining a golf towel (not shown).

**[0024]** Also coupled to the outside of the bag is a buckle portion 26. The golf bag 10 comes with an adjustable carrying strap 28 that is clipped within the metal ring 24 and strapped within the buckle portion 26. A series of holes 30 within the carrying strap allow the length of the strap 28 to be easily adjusted. The golf bag 10 also may also have a series of sewn-in loops that are used to hold an umbrella.

**[0025]** The golf bag 10 may be collapsible between the solid bottom 12 and top end 14. In this type of bag 10, the outer surface 38 of the bag is made of nylon or some type of flexible plastic material. The golf bag 10 may also be semi-rigid between the solid bottom 12 and top end 14. The outer surface 38, in this embodiment, may be made of leather or a synthetic material simulating the look and feel of leather.

**[0026]** The portions of the golf bag 10, as described above, may be considered typical and are not meant to be limited to the illustrated configuration. The purpose of describing the components of the golf bag 10 is described to illustrate the removable golf sleeve 50, which is the essence of the present invention.

**[0027]** Also shown in Figure 1, is a removable golf sleeve 50 shown in one preferred embodiment of the present invention. As shown in Figure 1, the removable golf sleeve 50 is inserted into the interior region 15 of the golf bag 10 and releasably attached to the golf bag 10 using clip 25. When a golfer has a shot that is located at a distance from the location of his golf bag 10, the golfer simply places one or more golf clubs in the sleeve 50 and unclips and removes the sleeve 50 from the golf bag 10.

**[0028]** In an alternative preferred embodiment, as shown in Figure 2, the removable golf sleeve 50 is contained on the exterior of the golf bag and is releasably coupled to the bag using clip 25. In addition, a second

optional clip 25A contained on the exterior of the golf bag 10 near the bottom of the golf bag 10 may be used to releasably couple the bottom structure 58 of the golf sleeve 50 to the golf bag 10.

**[0029]** A more detailed explanation of the golf sleeve 50 is illustrated in two preferred embodiments as shown in Figures 3-5 below.

**[0030]** Referring now to Figures 3-5, the golf sleeve 50 is preferably formed as a durable bag structure 52 having a sewn in, highly visible collar 54 at one end 57 and a sewn-in bottom structure 58 attached at the opposite end 60. The sleeve 50 also has a highly visible handle 62 sewn into the collar 54 at the top end and nylon bag 52 at its bottom end. A loop 56 is also sewn into the collar 54. As best shown in Figures 3 and 6, attached to the collar 54 is a metal ring 66 that is used to reversibly attach the sleeve 50 to the golf bag 10.

**[0031]** The durable bag structure 52 is preferably formed of a lightweight, flexible, water-resistant material that is enclosed on one end with the bottom structure 58 and open on the other end terminating in the sewn-in collar 54. The bag 52 is large enough to hold multiple golf clubs in such a way as to prevent water and dirt from accumulating on the grips of the golf clubs, even if the sleeve 50 is set down on wet or dirty ground.

**[0032]** One preferred material for use as the bag structure 52 is nylon, and more specifically 400-denier nylon. The length (l) of the bag structure 52 should be slightly less than the length of an average golf club and slightly less than the length of the golf bag 10 into which it is inserted so that it may be maintained in the interior region 15 while holding one or more golf clubs.

**[0033]** The bottom structure 58 is preferably formed of a durable plastic material that is sewn around the lower portion 60 of the bag structure 52 to form an enclosure. It is preferable that the bottom structure 58 reinforces the bag structure 52, as such the bottom structure is formed to be more durable than the bag structure 52. This is necessary to protect the grip portion of the golf clubs, which will lie against the bottom structure 58 as the sleeve 50 is transported to and from the golf ball. This also protects the bottom of the nylon bag 52 against the weight of the golf clubs during use. One durable plastic material that may be used in the bottom structure 58 is 1000-denier nylon.

**[0034]** The collar 54 surrounds and is sewn into the upper half of the nylon bag 52 and provides the open upper end through which golf clubs may be introduced to the interior 53 of the nylon bag 52. The collar 54 also has one or more rings 66 sewn therein that can be used to releasably attach the golf sleeve to the golf bag at the upper end.

**[0035]** As shown in Figures 1 and 2 in conjunction with the sleeve 50 as shown in Figures 3-6, a clip 25 is primarily secured to the metal ring 24 on the golf bag 10 and may be releasably coupled to one of the metal rings 66 to attach the sleeve 50 to the golf bag 10 during non-use. Alternatively, as shown in Figure 7, the clip 70 may be primarily secured to the metal ring 66 and releasably clipped to a metal ring 24 on the golf bag 10 to attach the sleeve 50 to the golf bag 10 during non-use.

**[0036]** The handle 62 primarily functions as the mechanism by which the golfer grips the sleeve 50 as it is transported to and from the golf ball. The handle 62 is sewn onto the nylon bag 52 and within the collar 54 such that the handle 62 is easily picked up by the golfer off the ground with a minimal chance of the golfer touching the ground, therein minimizing or preventing the golfer from getting his hand, with or without a golf glove, wet



or dirty. As the handle is stressed during use, it is preferably that the handle 62 be formed of a durable, lightweight and flexible material. One durable material that may be used in the handle 62 is 1000-denier nylon.

**[0037]** The loop 56 is sewn into the top of the collar 54 and primarily functions as an alternative handle for picking the sleeve 50 up out of the golf bag 10 or for picking the sleeve 50 up off the ground after use. The loop 56 may alternatively function as an easy attachment point for the sleeve 50 to the golf bag 10 when clips 25 or 70 are not used. For example, the loop 56 could be placed around the top of an umbrella, which is typically carried on the exterior of a golf bag 10. The loop 56 preferably is formed of similar materials to the handle 62 and collar 54.

**[0038]** The collar 54, loop 56, and handle 62 are formed in an alternative, bright color (such as bright yellow) that contrasts with the nylon bag portion 52, which is typically a muted color (such as black). This decreases the chances that the golfer will forget to retrieve the sleeve 50 after executing a golf shot. As one of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate, the color of the collar 54, loop 56, and/or handle 62 may alternatively be muted, while the nylon bag structure 52 is brightly colored and achieve the same contrasting effect.

**[0039]** Referring now to Figures 8 and 9, an alternative preferred embodiment of the golf sleeve 50 is illustrated as having a two-position tripod leg stand 80 in attached relation, to the portion of the durable bag structure 52, or more preferably to the collar 54. The tripod leg stand 80 allows the sleeve 50 to be set down such that the collar 54 and handle 62 is maintained above ground, therein preventing water or dirt from adhering to the collar 54 or handle 62 and also preventing water or dirt from entering the interior of the nylon bag 54 at the collar 54. This minimizes or prevents the golfer from getting his hand, with or without a golf glove, wet or dirty

when utilizing the sleeve 50. This also aids in preventing water and dirt from accumulating on the grips of the golf clubs as they are removed from the sleeve 50.

**[0040]** The tripod leg stand 80 consists essentially of two spread apart angularly oriented legs 82, 84 rotatably fixed within a pivotal mounting portion 88 high on the bag portion 52 at a location near the collar 54, or alternatively mounted within the collar 54. The pivotal mounting portion 88 is affixed to the bag portion 52 or collar in any number of different methods, including, for example, through the use of rivets. A shoe 86 or similar device disposed flush with the bottom portion 58 of the sleeve 50 and coupled to the pivoting mounting portion 88 via springs 90 is used to control the deployment of the legs 82, 84 to an open position from a closed position.

**[0041]** In the closed position, characterized when the sleeve 50 is being detached from the golf bag 10 or attached to the golf bag 10 without the shoe 86 touching the ground, the legs 82, 84 are maintained along the length of the bag portion 58 of the sleeve 50.

**[0042]** When the collar 54 is urged forwardly relative to the bottom portion 58 and shoe 86 (i.e., the open position), the total weight of the sleeve 50 and its contents are urged onto the shoe 86. This causes the shoe 86 to rise, therein causing the springs 90 to rise in response and forcing the legs 82, 84 to pivot outward from the mounting portion 88. The bottom 96, 98 of the respective legs 82, 84 are then placed on the ground such that the length of the bag portion 52 is rested at an angle relative to the ground. This allows the collar 54 to be maintained at a position above the ground and within easy access to the golfer. To move the bag back to the closed position, simply lift the sleeve 50 off the ground, or urge the

sleeve backward relative to the bottom portion 58 and shoe 86, such that the shoe 86 is urged back downwardly to its resting position by springs 90.

**[0043]** While one particular embodiment of the invention have been shown and described, numerous variations and alternative embodiments will occur to those skilled in the art. Accordingly, it is intended that the invention be limited only in terms of the appended claims.